1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
Mirebalais

461 476 533 The *combite* songs are distinctive in Haitian music for their melodic quality. Sung in unison, as is characteristic of most forms of Negro music, they contain the statement of a theme by the leader and a response from a chorus, so that the contrast between this great volume of sound from the chorus and the solo voice of the *simidor* is singularly effective. It is not the melodic qualities alone that make these songs so 406 533 461 626 203 appealing to the Haitians, however. At the *combite* a man not only learns all the gossip of the day, but enjoys learning and singing the songs which caustically comment on the shortcomings of neighbors, or evaluate the hospitality of those who have called *combites*, or detail scandal, phrased with sufficient directness to allow the reference of the song to remain clear, but warily, so as not to give the individual pilloried ground for direct recrimination. The *simidor* is thus a person to be feared, since in addition to his ability as a singer and a leader of song, he is also an outstanding improviser. As one Haitian expressed it, "The *simidor* is a journalist, and every *simidor* is a Judas!"

406 533 539 461 626 One or two examples of these songs will make clear their favor among a people to whose natural love of gossip is added a patterned relish for oblique public statement of individual shortcomings. The first comments on a miserly *combite* host:

À tè!	Down!
Moin dit, messieurs,	I say, messieurs,
Moin p'ralé nan combite ça-é	I went to that *combite*
Moin pas mangé.	[But] I did not eat.
Moin allé, moin pas joinne un grogue	I went, but I found no drink
Pour moin bwè.	To drink.
Assé-a! En é!	Enough! Up!
Moin dit, m::ssieurs,	I say, messieurs,
M'allé nan combite ça-é	I went to that *combite*

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CHAPTER X

VODUN WORSHIP: THE DANCE

THE *vodun* dance, the most public aspect of Haitian peasant ritual, has been more frequently observed and reported on than any other rites of the cult. The worship of the *loa* by an individual, the baptism of his *loa*, and the minor periodic sacrifices he makes to it that it may protect him are entirely private in nature, while presence at the *service* for the *loa* is essentially restricted to members of the family. The *vodun* dance, however, is viewed quite differently, for news of it is widely spread by word of mouth, so that, in contrast to the private character of all other rituals, *vodun* dances are important social occasions, and their success is measured by the numbers in attendance and the enthusiasm of the participants which makes a dance *chaud'* — "hot"!

The *vodun* dance may be said to function in several ways. Above all, it is an integral part of the worship of the *loa*, and as such is marked by repeated possessions which indicate the presence of the gods. Yet it also offers an important opportunity for recreation, as is indicated by the fact that in Mirebalais the term *bamboche*, which means a dance at which one merely enjoys oneself, is often applied to it. By no means do all who go to a dance become possessed, for of one hundred to one hundred and fifty persons present, no more than twenty or twenty-five will come under the power of their gods. The old